

# Baptist and Reflector

April 17, 1996

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STATEWIDE EDITION

■ **this week's news**

**global —**

- Knoxville native John T. McPherson was among Southern Baptist missionaries who were evacuated from Liberia April 11. — Page 3

**national —**

- Baptisms among SBC statistics that showed an increase in 1995. — Page 2

- Kentucky Baptist hospitals break ties with convention. — Page 3

- Beware of the occult, educator warns. — Page 10

**state —**

- State Royal Ambassadors hold Congress; Acteens meet for Summit. — Pages 6-7

- Bean Station congregation observes 100th anniversary. — Page 8

## State Senate approves lottery vote

By Wm. Fletcher Allen  
*Baptist and Reflector*

BRENTWOOD — Chances for a state-sponsored lottery improved somewhat last week as pro-lottery legislators had their way.

Tennessee senators breezed through a third and decisive vote Thursday, moving a controversial lottery-favoring bill over to the House of Representatives.

Sen. Steve Cohen of Memphis for several years has spearheaded approval of various types of gambling in Tennessee.

The third roll call passed by the largest majority, 19-14 on Thursday. An April 8 vote of 17-14 dittoed a vote taken the previous week.

SJR-4 now goes to the House, where representatives easily passed a similar bill last year.

The House of Representatives has four days (this week or next week) in which to approve the Senate's SJR-4. A simple measure to substitute the Senate version for the 1995 House version will probably be employed.

The House must get 51 votes on three separate occasions this term.

Approval by both houses of

the General Assembly would send the lottery resolution to the new General Assembly elected this November.

The legislators would have to give the resolution a two-thirds vote next January or in January 1998 in order to put it on the statewide ballot in November 1998.

Such a referendum would allow voters to decide whether to remove an 1834 constitutional provision that prevents lotteries in Tennessee.

If all that were to fail, the next opportunity for a statewide lottery vote in Tennessee would be in November 2002.

The debate on the lottery issue has been passionate for more than a dozen years, going back to 1984.

Lottery proponents say citizens should be allowed to vote on the issue. Some legislators agree. Others say that a lottery is not in the public's best interests even though lottery spokespersons claim a huge financial windfall for the state if a lottery is approved.

Lottery opposition expresses concern about the "unknown factors," specifically whether other forms of gambling would piggy-back the lottery. This issue remains unanswered for the most part.

Some citizens are fearful that lottery approval in the long run would cost the state much more in dollars than any promised income, and that the moral issue of gambling is important. At issue also is whether state government should get involved in encouraging gambling.

A total of 37 states have lotteries, including several Tennessee neighbors.

Senators voting for the lottery in the decisive third vote include:

Cohen, Cooper, Crowe, Crutchfield, Dixon, Ford, Gilbert, Harper, Haun, Haynes, Kyle, Miller, O'Brien, Rice, Rochelle, Springer, Wallace, Wright, and Wilder.

Against: Atchley, Burks, Carter, Elsea, Fowler, Hamilton, Henry, Holcomb, Jordan, Koella, Leatherwood, McNally, Person, and Womack. □

### Boomer/Buster conference cancelled; low registration

The Baby Boomer/Buster Conference scheduled for April 22 at Englewood Church, Jackson, is cancelled.

Johnnie Hall, Discipleship Training, and Julian Suggs, Church Music, cited lack of registration as the reason for cancellation. □

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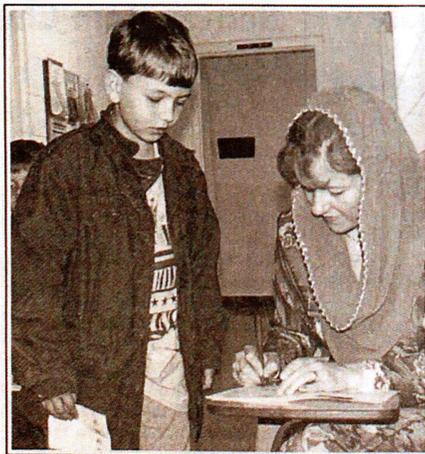
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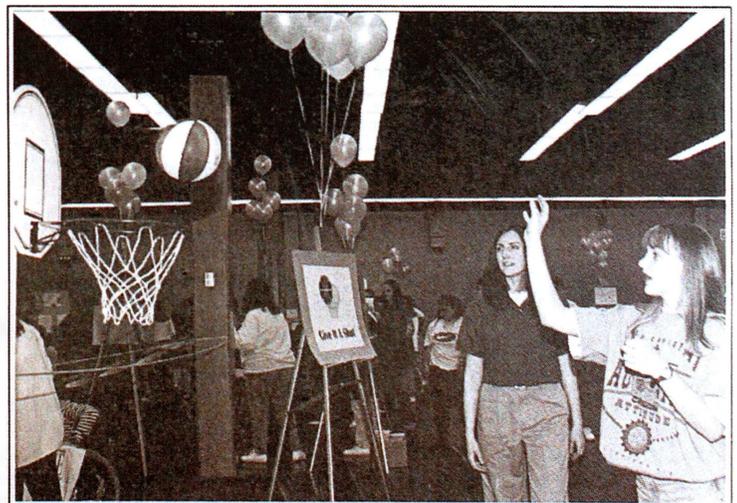
You who are reading this now, and all others who are TBC church members, are the ultimate audience of the *Baptist and Reflector*.

Beginning June 5, your paper will be "wrapped" in a more readable, attractive package, introducing some new ideas. — Editor

## State RAs, Acteens hold annual Spring gatherings



**MISSIONARY** Sherri Buntain of Malaysia signs a 'passport' for Mitchell Greene, a Royal Ambassador from Memorial Church, Maryville at the RA Congress held April 4-6 at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City. See page 6 for more photos and information.



**MAKING THE SHOT AFTER ANSWERING** a missions question is Allison Maynard of Gladeville Church, Gladeville, while Erica Cordell, game director and Tennessee Acteens panelist of Salem Church, Knoxville, watches. The game was a part of the Acteens Summit April 4-6 at Opryland Hotel, Nashville. See page 7 for more information.

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## SBC stats include gains, losses

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Increases in Southern Baptist church membership, baptisms, and number of churches led 1995 statistical gains for the denomination in a year that included a mixture of gains and losses in reporting areas.

The 1994-95 church year marked the second year of a new reporting process for the Annual Church Profile completed by individual churches.

The 1995 totals are statistically comparable to 1994, except in two categories, but not to earlier years, said Cliff Tharp, supervisor of the Baptist Sunday School Board's strategic information unit.

Church membership climbed to 15,668,077 in 1995, a gain of 48,165 or 0.3 percent over 1994. Baptisms for the year totaled 393,811, an increase of 15,348 or 4.1 percent over the previous year. The ratio of baptisms to total church membership was 1:40, a slight improvement over the 1994 ratio of 1:41.

Other church membership additions — transfer of church letter, joining by statement — totaled 468,737 in 1995, a decrease of 582 or 0.1 percent from the 1994 total of 469,319.

The number of churches topped 40,000, increasing from the 1994 total of 39,910 to 40,120, a gain of 210. Church-type missions operated by churches decreased by

195 or 4.6 percent to a 1995 total of 4,026.

In church program areas, music ministry enrollment/participation registered a 2.2 percent increase of 40,171 to a new total enrollment of 1,881,754.

Small decreases were reported in Woman's Missionary Union and Sunday School enrollments. WMU enrollment dropped by 43,427 or 3.9 percent to a new total of 1,061,279 while Sunday School enrollment declined by 55,698 or 0.7 percent to a new total of 8,207,860.

Significant changes in collection processes for Discipleship Training and Brotherhood enrollment/participation make the 1995 totals statistically noncomparable with 1994, according to Tharp.

The Discipleship Training enrollment/participation total was 2,171,993. Changes in reporting for 1995 were implemented to get more accurate totals, he said. The 1994 total was 2,223,955.

In Brotherhood enrollment/participation, the 1995 total was 749,310. For the first time, both men and women who participated in certain mission projects or mission action groups were included in the total. Also, enrollment in EZRA was included for the first time. EZRA is a coeducational approach to missions activities for children. And World Changers

was a separate item for the first time. These were major factors in the total representing a 15.9 percent increase.

Sunday morning worship attendance totaled 4,562,639 for 1995, an increase of 131,180 or 3 percent over the 1994 total of 4,431,459.

Tharp emphasized this figure represents the attendance in churches on the last Sunday of the associational year and is not necessarily an average for the year.

In financial areas, total tithes, offerings, and special gifts for the year were \$5,635,014,266, an increase of \$62,562,438 or 1.1 percent over 1994. Total receipts were \$6,069,724,030, a decrease of \$10,708,294 or 0.2 percent. Total mission expenditures registered a gain of 5.3 percent or \$43,138,681 to a 1995 total of \$858,779,214.

While annual statistics have traditionally been reported in February, Tharp said delays in distribution of the 1995 Annual Church Profile software and continuing adjustments to process changes at associational, state, and SBC levels resulted in a later release.

"In most cases, the primary responsibility for checking and verifying church statistics is now done by associations and state conventions because they are more knowledgeable about individual churches in their areas," Tharp said. □

## HMB leaders cite reasons for baptism increase

Baptist Press

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — The 4.1 percent increase in 1995 baptisms is no surprise to evangelism leaders, who credit an emphasis on personal witnessing and spiritual awakening.

**Tennessee Baptist churches reported 25,139 baptisms in 1995, an increase of 5.3 percent over the previous year.**

Southern Baptists set a record in 1972 with 445,725 baptisms. Since then, the number has gone up and down, reaching as low as 336,050 in 1978. In the 1994 church year, Southern Baptist churches reported 378,463 baptisms.

Last year Southern Baptists participated in their first simultaneous witnessing effort known as "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now."

The campaign called attention to every Christian's responsibility to share Jesus, said Darrell Robinson, Home Mission Board vice president for evangelism.

"God is at work all the time, but when we have an intentional emphasis (on evangelism), we reach more people. I commend local churches for getting back to the basics." □

## New Orleans hotels have additional rooms for SBC meeting

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — Previously reserved rooms in some New Orleans hotels for the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 11-13 have become available, according to SBC officials.

Jack Wilkerson, convention manager and vice president for business and finance for the SBC Executive Committee, said New Orleans officials have notified

him the previously reserved rooms in the SBC housing block have been turned back into the housing bureau. The rooms include some reserved by individuals and some by groups whose plans have changed or their numbers are less than originally thought.

"This translates to some room availability at hotels previously requested but which were not available at the time of the request," Wilkerson said.

"Also, if convention-goers have already reserved rooms but desire to move to another hotel, they should call the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau Housing number, (800) 345-1187, before May 8.

In addition, Union University's office of alumni affairs also has rooms available at two New Orleans hotels. Call the office of alumni affairs at (901) 661-5209 for information. □

### Daily Partnership Prayer Requests April



- 17 — Pray for the success and safe travels of women across the state of Michigan attending the annual WMU conference later this month.
- 18 — Pray for workers as they prepare to begin SALT training across the state of Michigan.
- 19 — Pray for the director of the HOPE Baptist Center in Detroit who is recovering from back surgery.
- 20 — Pray for volunteers who are willing to help complete the construction of a church for Newaygo Community Baptist Church. The construction began last summer.
- 21 — Pray for Canadian Baptist leader Allen Schmidt as he travels to Chile to visit Canadian foreign missionaries Ken and Cathy Yinger.
- 22 — Pray for Pat and Daisy Milne as they begin ministry at FBC, Grand Forks, British Columbia.
- 23 — Pray for Dovercourt Association as it seeks a new DOM.

## Beaver Dam Church pastor dies

For Baptist and Reflector

KNOXVILLE — Terry Taylor, pastor of Beaver Dam Church, Knoxville, since 1986, took his own life April 10.

Taylor had been out of the pulpit since January due to an illness, said Walter Taylor, director of missions for Knox County Association.

The Beaver Dam pastor had been suffering from clinical depression for the past three years, according to Minister of Music Mike Buntain. The church was hopeful that their pastor would be able to return to the pulpit by mid-summer, Buntain added.

Walter Taylor described the Beaver Dam pastor as one who was very involved in evangelism

and his work as a pastor. "He was a soul-winner. His first love and passion was winning people to Christ," Taylor said.

The church is coping, Buntain said.

"We're dealing with a wide range of emotions, yet we find strength day to day from the Lord to move into further ministry, realizing that our faith is stronger than any illness," he added.

Terry Taylor is survived by his wife, Mary, and two grown children, who live in Georgia.

Don Garner, professor of Old Testament and head of the religion department at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, is serving as interim pastor at the church. □

## Kentucky Baptist hospitals break state convention ties

By Mark Wingfield  
For Baptist Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Trustees of Kentucky's Baptist Healthcare System unanimously voted March 19 to break formal ties with the Kentucky Baptist Convention and name their own successors to the agency's board.

Currently, the KBC elects three-fourths of Baptist Health Care System's 24-member board of directors as part of a covenant agreement ratified between the two entities in 1986.

That covenant agreement has allowed the president of Baptist Healthcare System to recommend individuals for the trustee board to the KBC committee on nominations. Beyond controlling three-fourths of the board appointments, the KBC has retained no significant ability to direct the affairs of the hospital system.

Baptist Healthcare System is one of the largest nonprofit hospital systems in Kentucky

with facilities in Louisville, Paducah, Lexington, Corbin, and LaGrange. The system employs 6,800 people and include 1,546 licensed beds in its five hospitals.

In the current budget year, the KBC contributes only \$5,000 to Baptist Healthcare System.

While the March 19 vote was to dissolve the entire covenant agreement, "the only change which the board sought was the right to elect its own members," President Tommy Smith wrote in a March 20 letter to KBC Executive Secretary Bill Marshall.

Smith wrote the move was not made to abandon Baptist roots but to equip the system "to deal with the rapid changes taking place in health care and to protect its work from being undermined by the kinds of struggles taking place in other Baptist institutions."

Smith elaborated in an April 4 interview. "The board basically wanted to be in control of its own destiny." □

## Tennessean among missionaries in evacuation from Liberia

By Marty Croll  
for Baptist Press

MONROVIA, Liberia — Eight of 10 Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries who had been holed up in a compound on the outskirts of Monrovia joined a high-speed U.S. Embassy convoy to a secured airfield April 11.

They spent the night safely at the airfield, planning to evacuate by U.S. military helicopter. Their evacuation was to route them through Freetown, Sierra Leone, a 90-minute flight, and then to Dakar, Senegal. Mission officials have reserved tickets for them from Dakar to Lome, Togo, where they will stay in a Baptist conference center.

Missionaries loaded their own cars with luggage, food, and water, then followed embassy security officials along the bypass, dodging sniper fire, "sometimes going 90 miles per hour," a U.S. Embassy official said.

Edward and Fran Laughridge of Rock Hill, S.C., chose to stay at the compound. The others agreed Laughridge would handle the mission's administrative affairs in their absence.

In a phone call to Abidjan, mission administrator Bradley Brown of Marietta, Ga., and his wife, Carolyn, of East Point, Ga., were "more than ready to go." The Browns are longtime

missionaries to Liberia and have stayed through some of the most frightening times there.

Activity by splinter militia groups has grown more intense in the streets around the missionaries' concrete-walled compound. News reports monitored in Abidjan April 11 said food, water, and medicine were growing scarce, and killing, raping, and looting are rampant in Monrovia. After relative calm between opposing factions April 10, chaos has evolved into dangerous anarchy.

FMB policy leaves the decision whether to go or stay to the discretion of each missionary. Often FMB missionaries are among the last to leave besieged areas because of ties with friends who live there and the openness to Jesus Christ they sense among people in the midst of uncertainty and conflict.

The six-year civil war in Liberia has forced missionaries to move into the capital city, more stable in recent years than outlying areas.

Besides the Browns, those deciding to leave were: Rachel DuBard of Carrollton, Miss.; Felix Jr. and Dene Greer, both of Jackson, Miss.; John T. McPherson of Knoxville; and James and Jane Park of Paducah, Ky.

Southern Baptists are asked to be in "earnest prayer" for the missionaries and the people of Liberia. □

## Promise Keepers, Brotherhood urge local church ministries

By Tim Palmer  
For Baptist Press

ST. LOUIS — If any Promise Keepers participants this year hail from Southern Baptist churches without organized men's ministries, it won't be for lack of Brotherhood Commission resources to start them.

And it won't be because Promise Keepers isn't encouraging them to do just that.

These two facts came through loud and clear at the Midwest Regional Legacy Builders Rally sponsored by the SBC Brotherhood Commission March 29-30 at First Church, Ferguson, in St. Louis. Approximately 200 men

gathered for a weekend program that combined inspirational messages, information sharing, and music.

Glenn Wagner, vice president of the Denver-based movement, said the 22 Promise Keepers rallies this year — which will draw an estimated 800,000 men to stadiums, coliseums, domes, and two motor speedways across the country — are simply a tool. The "critical event," he explained, is "one man making and keeping his promises in and through the context of the local church."

Wagner used terms such as "catalyzing agent," "jump start," and "igniter" to describe Promise Keepers' role in men's

spiritual lives. Though many find the rallies a "mountaintop experience," God never had anyone live on a mountaintop permanently, Wagner said. "You can build a strategy off of that, but it's not the whole thing."

Wagner, who was a pastor for 20 years, offered suggestions for starting men's ministries in the local church, beginning with a profile of the men's interests, needs, and desires. This can be done through focus groups or similar means, Wagner said.

With a core group of men with a vision for reaching the community, Wagner advised, have them spend three or four months doing nothing but

praying for the men in the church.

Next, develop a mission statement, Wagner said, commenting that the chief complaint he hears about men's ministries in churches is: "I don't know where we're going." Men are target-driven, he said.

Keep the men focused on relationships, not programs, Wagner suggested. The mark of success is not the number in attendance, but whether men deepen in their relationship with other men and with Jesus Christ.

It is not chauvinistic to have men-only activities, Wagner stated, observing women in churches have been meeting that way for years.

He also noted a men's group should have the pastor's support, but should not be pastor-led. Pour Ephesians 4 into the men, he advised the pastors present, then release them to do their work.

Jim Burton, men's ministries director for the Brotherhood Commission, outlined the options and materials available to men's groups through the agency. The list includes four traditional ministries — team builders, prayer teams, mission action teams, and evangelism teams. Three newer areas — career support teams, recovery ministry teams, and encouragement teams — complete the selection. □

## President vetoes abortion legislation

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton vetoed the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act which would prohibit a gruesome, late-term abortion procedure.

He vetoed the bill April 10 even though it received overwhelming support in the House of Representatives, including the support of 72 Democrats. While the House may be able to achieve a two-thirds majority in an over-ride attempt, such an effort appears doomed in the Senate, where it passed by only 10 votes. □

## One year later, Oklahomans cope, grieve

Baptist Press

OKLAHOMA CITY — For 168 people who died in the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building blast April 19, 1995, life is no more. But for the victims who survived and the hundreds of family members and friends of those who died, life now is seen differently.

"I'm not the same person because I'm not in the same setting anymore," said A.C. Cooper whose wife, Dana, child care director at the building, and son, Christopher, 2, were killed in the bombing. "I don't have a normality I once had, and I still don't have meaning to my life."

"I not only lost my husband, I lost my whole family," said Janet Walker, whose husband, David, was killed. "People think you should go on with your life, but it's not that easy."

"After a year of reflection, I've learned what is important in life," reflected Ruth Heald Schwab, who survived the blast but had numerous injuries, including the loss of sight in one eye. "A career or keeping a house clean aren't important. What's important is family, and showing them love."

"The holidays were very difficult," confessed Robbie Maroney, whose husband, Mickey, died in the building. "His birth-

day was in October, then Thanksgiving, and my birthday in November, and Christmas in December. We were very family-oriented. Those are family times, and it was very hard."

"I've definitely learned to live for the moment a little bit more," said Carrie Brown, Dana Cooper's sister. "Not so much disregarding consequences, but realizing this is the only chance God gives us, and if we don't do his work the first time around, we're not going to have a chance to do it."

"Psychologists have told us that domestic strife and divorces of survivors, victims, emergency workers, and fami-

lies involved will increase," said Joe Williams, chaplaincy director for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, who spent the days following the bombing at the site.

Many survivors will never work again, Williams said, and they will be in counseling or therapy for years — depending on their ages, perhaps for the rest of their lives. More victims, survivors, and emergency workers will become unemployable within a year, he said, adding some emergency workers have taken early retirement and some have not worked since leaving the bomb site almost a year ago. □

# Missionary struggles with leaving Liberia

By Marty Croll  
For Baptist Press

DAKAR, Senegal — As the shoreline of Liberia faded into the distance underneath a smoky haze, Bradley Brown's insides wrenched with grief.

Brown, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionary from Marietta, Ga., knew the helicopter airlifting him to safety April 12 was swiftly putting distance between him and the place he called home for more than three decades.

How he left crushed him the most. "We left so many dear people almost in a state of shock. They were in bewilderment as they tried to help us get ready to go. It was just almost more than I could take," Brown said after evacuating to Dakar, Senegal, with his wife and six other missionaries.

"You can't be in a place for 33 years and leave it like that, and just say to yourself, 'Well, that's the way it is.' You can't expect it that way."

Missionaries leaving with the Browns were Rachel DuBard of Carrollton, Miss.; Felix and Dene Greer, both of Jackson, Miss.; John T. McPherson of Knoxville, Tenn.; and James and Jane Park, both of Paducah, Ky. Edward and Fran Laughridge, of

Rock Hill, S.C., decided to pass up that airlift, but they too were forced to evacuate shortly afterward. They arrived in Dakar April 13.

Mission board policy leaves the decision of whether to go or stay to the discretion of each missionary. Often Foreign Mission Board missionaries are among the last to leave besieged areas because of ties with friends who live there and the openness to Jesus Christ they sense among people in the midst of uncertainty and conflict.

Relief at barely escaping death didn't figure in Brown's memories as he recalled the ordeal he and his colleagues lived through after civil war violence began in the wee hours of April 6 and degenerated into bloody anarchy.

Relief, no. Sadness, yes. Sadness for the place where he and his wife, Carolyn, of East Point, Ga., reared their four children. Sadness for the Liberian friends they left behind.

In Senegal, the missionary evacuees — veterans of Liberia — told of a country they had never known before, not even in other days of the six-year civil war. Still fresh were images of death witnessed through bullet-proof windows in a U.S. Embassy vehicle speeding along the streets of Monrovia.

The group had planned to leave in a

convoy. But just moments before their embassy escort was to arrive, they were told by two-way radio to abandon their cars. Carrying a piece of luggage each, they piled in with an embassy security officer and sped away — just as armed troops broke into their compound. "The very time we were rushing out our back gate, fighters were coming in the front to get our vehicles," Brown said.

A high-speed drive carried the missionaries around the city, past people taking potshots at each other while hanging off or standing atop vehicles commandeered from peacekeeping troops. It also took them within sight of what had been a serene area, where United Nations buildings were now billowing out columns of smoke.

"This had to be one of the saddest days of my life," Brown said. "The whole city is being destroyed. The fighters are on a high. The saddest thing is the anarchy that reigns now — and the suffering of the people."

Years of civil war had forced Southern Baptist missionaries to move into housing on a compound on the outskirts of the capital city, more stable than outlying areas because of west African peacekeeping troops under United Nations command. Missionaries have worked to meet human needs by

participating in hunger relief and have fought to keep a seminary going. Until recent weeks, the seminary had been meeting in a rented building, after successive groups of peacekeepers commandeered the Baptist seminary compound.

The security officer who rescued the missionaries negotiated their evacuation with a general of the faction who controlled the surrounding territory, Brown said. Brown had felt protection from this faction and from the U.S. military and embassy since shelling first began.

Through it all, he knew it was God, ultimately, who was protecting him and the others. "We had the Lord and his angels," Brown said.

In Dakar, missionaries will be meeting for the next several days with leaders of the Foreign Mission Board's west Africa area office. They are trying to determine together what the future holds for their ministry.

Brown remembered his mother asking him a couple of years before she died in 1978, "Son, don't you think your work in Liberia is finished now?" I had to say to her then, 'No, Momma, the Lord hasn't told me that.' But there's a strange feeling it is now. I'm afraid this was our farewell to Liberia." □

## Convention restructuring panel to hear state executives

For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Nine state Baptist convention leaders have been asked to meet May 2 with a Southern Baptist Convention task force as an "information resource" for the denomination's restructuring.

Robert Reccord, chairman of the Implementation Task Force guiding the restructuring process of the SBC, said the groups will meet in Dallas. The

state executives' group is chaired by William M. Pinson Jr., executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

One of the purposes for the meeting, according to ITF officials, is for the state executives to advise the ITF as its work relates to state conventions. The ITF is a 10-member task force appointed by the SBC Executive Committee to guide the restructuring process approved by the SBC last year. Among

other things, the restructuring will reduce the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12.

The other eight state executives appointed by Pinson are Fermin Whittaker, California; William Causey, Mississippi; Carlisle Driggers, South Carolina; Wyndell Jones, Iowa; R. Rex "Peck" Lindsay, Kansas-Nebraska; Ken Lyle, New England; John Sullivan, Florida; and William Tinsley, Minnesota-Wisconsin.

In a February meeting with Baptist state executive directors, Reccord asked that they become a "resource pool" as the SBC transitions into the "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring aimed at strengthening the SBC's service to churches toward fulfilling the Great Commission during the coming century.

Reccord said he told the state leaders the ITF needs their insight into how the re-

structuring impacts issues on a state level.

"They will help us see these issues more clearly from a state convention perspective," said Reccord, pastor of First Church, Norfolk, Va., and a member of the SBC Executive Committee.

Reccord noted one of the key concerns in state conventions is "how cooperative agreements between the HMB and the states will be affected." □

AFTER  
2,000 YEARS,  
PEOPLE  
AROUND  
THE WORLD  
STILL NEED  
JESUS.

Share Christ's Love  
Through The Cooperative  
Program



## Southern Baptists observe CP Day on April 21

### HOW THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM WORKS



The Cooperative Program is the financial plan of the Southern Baptist Convention. It was begun in 1925. Through it, churches of the Convention support the work of their state conventions and the SBC.

When a Southern Baptist church gives money through the Cooperative Program, it is combined with money from other churches. These funds support mission ministries in state conventions, in the nation, and finally throughout the far reaches of the world. In other words, through the Cooperative Program, one church is linked with 39,000 other churches of the Southern Baptist Convention to form a powerful team to carry out the mission Christ gave to His church.

The Cooperative Program begins with you and your church, and provides support for missions in your state, for 5,000 missionaries in the USA, and for over 4,000 missionaries residing in more than 130 countries and ministering in over 150 countries around the world.



# Coming to grips with immobilizing stress

Coping with stress, depression, problems, can occupy an inordinate amount of time — if you don't have the most pertinent information or if you fail to act on that information.

Stress can do more than complicate a person's life — spinoffs from that stress can sometimes be life-threatening. It also can cause irrational behavior, high blood pressure, and resultant effects.

And in addition to these, stress and/or depression can render ineffective Christian witnesses.

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

Years ago, Welton Gaddy was speaking to a group on missions and ministries. The former Christian Life Commission staff member and pastor had some positive words of cheer which might help prevent or alleviate complications caused by stress, depression, frustration, and withdrawal.

Gaddy gave sound advice to troubled people "when life comes tumbling in and seems to be out of control."

First step, said Gaddy, is to be honest about the situation. The problem can be dealt with most effectively when we look at it honestly.

Get plenty of rest, he said. We need to be at our best physically and that means getting the rest that will strengthen us as we cope.

Reach out to friends. Don't withdraw into a shell. Reject the impulse to prove your strength by "holding it all in." Unload and unwind with those friends who really want to reach out to you.

Resist cynicism. Fight the temptation to treat breakdown of trust with cynicism. Be courageous about this.

Keep a sense of humor. Humor and laughter build faith. When you stop laughing completely, you are really sick. With faith, we can cope with all that is incompatible with our situation.

Pray. Don't pray because that is all there is left to do. Pray believing in results, answers. It does not make sense to refrain from prayer because God does not seem near. He would seem near if only we would pray.

Don't repress or deny anger — channel it. Anger is a way of saying you really care

about what's happening. Deal with it. Declare it and affirm hope.

Renew dreams. Disillusionment and disappointment bring despair, disorientation. But there is always the opportunity to start again.

Exercise faith. Faith is not a blind leap in the dark — it is our foundation. We can face the future because we know the God who owns the future. The future can be faced with knowledge from life's lessons.

Following these guidelines does not mean stress nor its cause will go away quickly. It does mean that you have put into force some actions to enable you to keep moving, and to continue coping. □

■ one word more  
By Wm. Fletcher Allen editor

## Let third team play

I like tennis. I enjoy playing the game, and also I enjoy watching good players.

Recently the national team from the United States competed with the best team from the Czech Republic.

They were not playing in an insignificant tournament, something at a country club gala.

The players were competing for the opportunity to advance in Davis Cup competition.

Let me explain the Davis Cup.

Only the best teams are eligible to take part in Davis Cup action, and it is "nationalistic."

That is, the best of the best tennis nations are supposed to compete throughout the year, advancing until only two teams are left in December.

In the first round, the best players of the United States were committed to play in other tournaments — where prize money was great.

The U.S. team lost to the Czechs.

But the difference was easy to explain. Though they played their best, the U.S. team was not made up of our best players.

I admire the team coach. He made no excuses. He said the team that represented us did their best.

He could have said also, "Let the third team play."

That is the way it is sometimes in our churches. Those people best suited for certain places of service may refuse to serve. God doesn't waste any time.

He says, in effect, "Let the third team play."

I have always looked forward to Davis Cup action all through the year. It is some of the best tennis played.

But this year, for the remaining months, the U.S. is out.

The coach let the third team play, and they played their best. The Czech team was better.

In life, in church, we sometimes let the third team play. It should always be because they are ready, and not because the first and second teams defaulted.

We should all play as if we are "first team." □



ALLEN

## Family life needs all available help

Those folk who grew up on the farm probably understand the old adage about barking up the wrong tree.

We stand by our January commitment to provide more help for families. However, it is a mistake for anyone to think that a Baptist state paper can provide all the answers for stressed families. We will need to work together.

We do not think for a moment that the paper is barking up the wrong tree in declaring 1996 as a year to try to assist efforts toward a saner, safer, closer, family lifestyle. No, we are not barking up the wrong tree. On the farm hounds sometimes get sidetracked from the main trail of pursuit, and pause to give chase to a false trail. That's when the farmer, or hunter, says of the baying hounds, "They are barking up the wrong tree."

We believe in the Biblical view of family life. We believe in the lifestyle that Jesus Christ lived and authenticated.

We also believed he intends for families to be centered on love, caring, and enduring relationships.

The resolution that was passed unanimously by Tennessee Baptists during last November's annual meeting should be more than pretty words on paper.

The resolution speaks clearly for family life. Those who voted must remember that it called for actions on behalf of family life. The family must be nurtured, cared for, protected, honored.

A newspaper can only give the facts and urge. We do that. Tell us what you are doing for families in your church and community. Families need help. We ask at least 96 churches to join us in 1996. □

## ■ just for today

By Fred Wood pastor emeritus Eudora Church, Memphis

### Start with a smile

Penny: "I'm glad I decided to follow your advice and accept Don's proposal." Winnie: "You've decided you and he can be happy together?" Penny: "Not really. It's just that if our marriage doesn't 'make it,' I can blame you."

### Take this truth

Taking responsibility for our own actions is a duty we dislike. Yet, this is the foundation stone of all character development. When God made us in his image, he gave us, among other things, the power of choice. Goethe said, "Choose wisely, your choice is brief yet endless."

### Memorize this Scripture

"I have set before you life and death ... therefore choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

### Pray this prayer

Lord, help me attempt to make God-honoring choices. Also, help me, once I have made the choice, to accept full responsibility for it. □

# Empathy vital in parenting

We have been dealing with the subject of parenting teenagers, using the acrostic of PARENT, for presence, awareness, responsibility, empathy, nurture, and toughness. Now we will discuss empathetic parenting skills.

Empathy is an important and needed skill for a parent with teenagers. Empathy is defined as the ability to understand and feel what another feels, to put yourself in another person's shoes.

Empathy needs to be differentiated from sympathy. Sympathy can be a destructive emotion in the parenting process.

First, sympathy feels "for" the other while empathy feels "with" the person. The weakness of sympathy is that one has the desire to take the responsibility for the way the other person feels, and therefore, for the actions the person may perform as a result of those feelings.

On the other hand, empathy feels what the other person feels while allowing the person to take responsibility for his own actions.

## ■ families matter

By Paul Barkley, counselor and professor

Another weakness of sympathy is that it tries to understand the other person's situation from his or her own point, while empathy tries to understand from the other person's view. Sympathy is often more self-centered than other-centered.

Many parents want to understand their children from the vantage point of their own youth rather than the situation of today.

Empathy accepts our teenagers as they are while sympathy may try to "fix" them. Sympathy can be a manipulative ploy to attempt to get our children to do what we want rather than allowing them to reach their potential.

Many parents, while sympathizing with the teenager, attempt to "guilt" him into the parents' plan for a life vocation rather than letting the teenager develop personal interests and talents.

Perhaps the greatest weakness of sympathy as compared

to empathy's penchant to be "sucked in" gullibly by the teenager.

Empathy retains a healthy detachment from over-involvement in the teenager's plight.

While it is important to take the teenager's perspective, the parent cannot afford to be blinded by gullibility into participation in the teenager's faulty reasoning.

Hebrews reminds us that "we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need" (4:15-16, NASB).

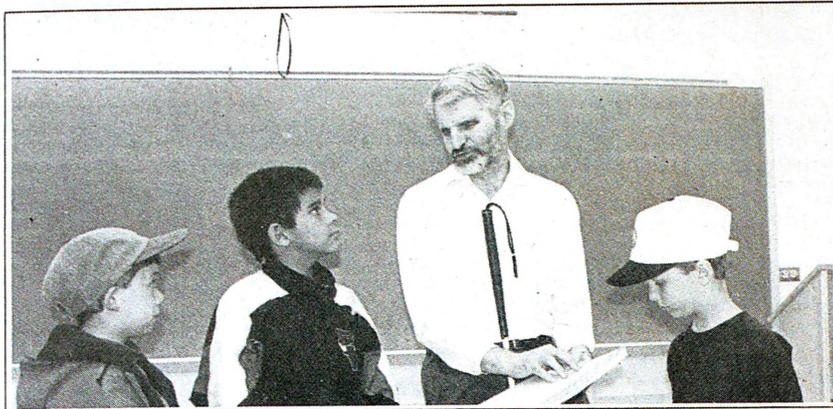
We parents must relate to our teenagers the same way that our Heavenly Father relates to us. Even though the word sympathy is used, I believe that the principle of empathy is involved. God does not feel "for" us, but "with" us, and offers us mercy and grace. □



BARKLEY

## ■ Tennessee features

# 1,139 Royal Ambassadors meet for annual RA Congress



**CHARLES COUEY**, center, director of ministry with the blind at Park Avenue Church, Nashville, and a consultant in blind ministry with the Tennessee Baptist Convention discusses his work with RAs, from left, Johnny Mack Stephens and Nicky Berrettoni of Southside Church, Dyersburg, and Christopher Atkins of Pleasant Grove Church, Maryville.

For Baptist and Reflector

**JEFFERSON CITY** — The 1,139 Royal Ambassadors from all across the state who attended the 42nd Tennessee Royal Ambassador Congress April 4-6 at Carson-Newman College got a good dose of missions education mixed with plenty of fun.

Boys were able to attend mission conferences and a mission fair where they could have personal contact with home, foreign, and state missionaries.

RAs also provided \$2,853 for a missions offering which benefits three areas: the Steinmann/Black Memorial Fund which provides scholarships; associational Tennessee Royal Ambassador Camps; and reference books for the Baptist seminaries in Poland and Canada. Money was raised through a 5K Walk/Run for Missions, a missions carnival, and a special offering during the Friday evening worship service.

During the Congress new state officers for 1996-97 were elected: Jason Roy, First Church, Sweetwater, president; Jeff Alexander, Big Spring Church, Cleveland, secretary; and Andrew Lindsey, Northport Church, Newport, missions activity leader.

John Smith, former TRAC staffer, was special guest for the Friday evening service, and Tonya Stoutt-Brown, an RA leader from Blount County, was the Saturday morning worship leader. Another former TRAC staffer, David Campbell, was music coordinator. □



**SHOWING RAs** that even firemen can be volunteers is Gene Williams, a member of Oak Grove Church, Mt. Carmel. Williams, a fireman with the city of Kingsport, has participated in two Home Mission Board, seven foreign mission board, and one state mission trip. With Williams from left are Todd Mills, Robert McDonald, Nathan Singleton, and Jonathan Smeltzer, all of Central Church, Fountain City, Knoxville.



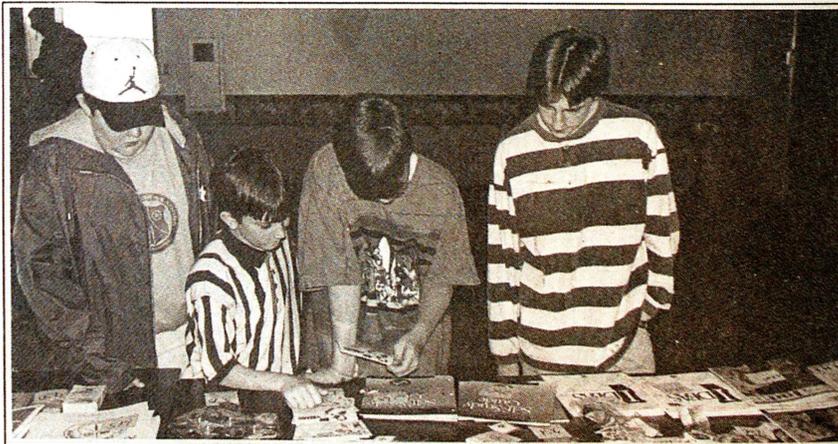
**TRAVIS ADKISSON**, left, and Jeff Alexander of Big Spring Church, Cleveland, set up an RA racer. Cars raced against a clock to see which was the fastest.



**CATHRYNE HOWARD** of Oak Grove Church, Covington, helps Justin Swatzell, an RA from First Church, Greeneville, assemble toys that will be sent to Southern Baptist missionary Van Gladden in Mexico who will distribute the toys to poor children in the area he works.



**NOT ASHAMED** to admit they didn't quite have the energy of the Royal Ambassadors they brought to the RA Congress at Carson-Newman College were, from left, Tim Luckey and Mark Stanley of Antioch Church, Humboldt, and Tom Massey of Alpha Church, Morristown.



**LOOKING AT RA items** for sale at the Congress were, from left, Wesley Brewer, Matthew McFalls, Andy McFalls, and Josh Pierce, all of Cedar Grove Church, Kingston. The boys were among the 1,139 who attended the state RA Congress held April 4-6 at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City. — Photos by Lonnie Wilkey

# 1,528 Acteens gather for '96 Summit

By Connie Davis  
Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — The 1996 Acteens Summit drew 1,528 young women in grades 7-12 to study missions, celebrate their achievements during the past year, and commission those who will serve in missions in the coming year.

Meeting at Opryland Hotel April 4-6, Acteens and their leaders attended conferences, Summit sessions, and a Missions Journey, which included games and a competition. Twenty-nine Acteen Activator teams of about 175 Acteens and leaders were commissioned for service.

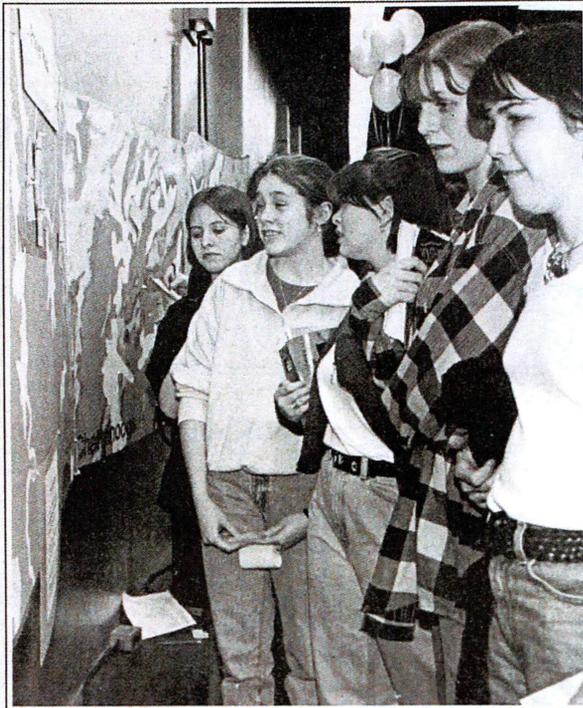
Participants heard nine missionaries including Melanie Vincent who worked in Argentina. Vincent and her husband, Gene, are now serving at First Church, Woodbury, where he is pastor. Vincent told how a man named Santiago searched for a church which was teaching the Bible until he found a Baptist church. Santiago and many of the members of his extended family became Christians and leaders in the church in Concepcion, said Vincent. They helped the church grow and because they were younger than other members, they began construction work to provide needed space. "The Lord has his perfect timing for everything," she said.

Vincent asked Acteens to pray for the country because the economy has weakened, making it hard for anyone to make a living.

Nan Dickerson, who served last summer as an Acteen Activator, also spoke. The Acteen Activator program provides foreign and home missions experiences for Acteens.

Dickerson, a member of Second Church, Union City, worked at the Migrant Mission Center in Hope, Ark., for a week. The center is the only one of its kind in the United States, she said. The state provides lodging for 12 hours and Baptists offer gifts, refreshments, literature, and worship services. The offerings give migrants relief from their long travels between Texas and Michigan.

The experience enabled her to report on migrants and her Christian faith during a class at her school, said Dickerson. □



**CHECKING OUT A STATE MAP** featuring prayer requests from missionaries are Acteens, from left, Lindsey James, Melissa Elkins, Natalie Huffman, Katie Maxwell, and Micah Blanchard, all from Brighton Church, Brighton.



**TRYING THE JELLY BEAN MATCH** are Jessica Elkins, left, Ridgeview Church, Knoxville, and Patsy Hodges, First Church, Sevierville. They also became acquainted during the game. — Photos by Connie Davis



**TESTING THEIR MISSIONS IQ** are, from left, Glenda Baker, leader from New Middleton Church, Gordonsville; Summer Boyd, Gladeville Church, Gladeville; and Amanda Johnson, Gladeville Church.



◀ **SINGING A SONG** in Spanish she learned while working with migrants as an Acteen Activator is Nan Dickerson, Second Church, Union City, who led a conference.



**PERFORMING A SONG IN SIGN LANGUAGE** is the drama group Face to Face of Birmingham, Ala. They include, from left, Karen Anderson, Kim-Lyn Tan, and Marty Gordon.



**RELAYING PUZZLE PIECES** to their team members trying to complete puzzles are, from left, April Johnson, Royce Church, Oak Ridge; Summer Boyd, Gladeville Church, Gladeville; and Brandi O'Neal, Gladeville Church.

## Glisson house burns in Memphis

For Baptist and Reflector

MEMPHIS — The home of Tennessee Baptist evangelist Phil Glisson and his family was burned April 5.

The Glissons were away at the time. The home is a total loss and the Glissons have tentative plans to rebuild.

Glisson had to leave the next day for a revival at First Church, Andersonville, April 7-10.

They are temporarily staying at the missionary home of Eudora Church, Memphis.

The evangelist may be reached at (901) 682-0010. □

## Tennessee recreators plan spring retreat

For Baptist and Reflector

CROSSVILLE — The Tennessee Baptist Recreators Association will hold a Spring Fitness Retreat for the body, mind, and soul April 22-24 at Fairfield Glade Resort near Crossville.

Special guests include Dick Covey, Baylor University professor; Ray Conner, retired BSSB church recreation director; Roger Freeman, pastor, First Church, Clarksville; and John Garner, BSSB consultant.

For more information, contact Chuck O'Conner at (901) 754-1723. □

## Classified

**POSITION VACANCY:** Southside Church, Martin, is seeking a part-time Minister of Youth. Please send resume and the names and addresses of three references to Frank Vincent, Search Committee Chair, Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 121, Martin, TN 38237.

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Central Church Furnishings

# Adriel Church, Bean Station, celebrates centennial

For Baptist and Reflector

BEAN STATION — The congregation of Adriel Missionary Church here appreciates history. Until 1967 it met in a building that was not only its

original building, but that was dismantled, moved, and rebuilt to make way for Cherokee Lake in 1941. The members wanted to preserve its original decor, records report, which had been built by two brothers,

Thomas Daniel Crosby and Lemuel Powell Crosby.

Fire destroyed the building in 1967. Undaunted, the members gathered in a school. They held some Wednesday services in homes, but didn't miss a service until a new building was completed.

Other stages of its history include a church campus renovation, which was completed in 1991, and the addition of a pavillion in 1989. A new fellowship hall is nearly completed.

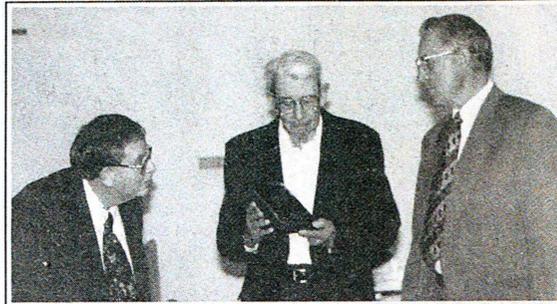
The church's name also holds importance for members. Records reveal it was chosen because Adri is Hebrew for flock

and El is Hebrew for God.

On March 31 about 400 gathered for the centennial activities led by Billy C. Carroll, pastor for 18 years. Charles Oliver, pastor, Milan Church, Maynardville, spoke during the morning service.

Thirty-three people who had been members for more than 50 years were recognized, along with two former pastors and four widows of former pastors. John and Betty Collins and Howard and Dorothy Hileman, former pastors and their wives, were thanked. The Hilemans were present.

A luncheon was held in the new fellowship hall. □



HOLDING A PLAQUE from the Tennessee Baptist Historical Society which was presented by David Tydings, left, director of missions, Grainger County Association, is Howell Kirkham, chairman of deacons who has been a member more than 50 years. Billy C. Carroll, pastor, looks on. — Photo by Alan Medders of Carson-Newman College

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# TenneScene ■ the people, their work

## ■ the churches

■ **Wildersville Church, Wildersville**, will host The Laborours, a singing group, April 20. The church also will hold a revival April 21-26. Skip Youngcourt from New Johnsonville, will speak.

■ **First Church, Memphis**, is serving as a day center for homeless families through the city's Interfaith Hospitality Network. Second Church and Brinkley Heights Church also plan to become involved in the ministry.

■ **Tri-Cities Church, Gray**, held its first service in its new facility April 14 and will dedicate it April 28. The church was organized in 1990 and has been meeting at Sullivan South High School. The church will hold a Dedication Evangelism Conference April 21-25. Gray Allison, president, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis; Adrian Rogers, pastor, Bellevue Church, Cordova; and Bill Stafford will speak.

■ **Shiloh Church, Decatur**, will hold a youth revival May 5-9. DeWayne Howard, pastor, Short Creek



**THE BAPTIST STUDENT UNION** center at Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, boasts a new roof thanks to the singles of First Church, Maryville. The project cost more than \$1,000 and involved about 25 singles. The work was led by Sue Wood, missions leader last year; Van Colby, project leader; and Marcia A. Brown, singles director.

Church, Athens, will speak.

■ **Greenvale Church, Church Hill**, will hold its 50th Anniversary Jubilee May 5-7. William Boyd Bingham III will speak. The Perrys, a music group, will perform in the evening service.

■ **Short Creek Church, Athens**, will hold a youth rally on May 10. Mike Williams, new pastor of Lamontville Church, Calhoun, will speak and the Singing Tennesseans from Cleveland, will perform.

■ **Triune Church, Triune**, broke ground April 7 for a new sanctuary. The congregation has been meeting in a home converted for use for three years.

■ **Calvary Church, Lenoir City**, will hold Magnificent May Days each Monday evening. The following will lead: May 6 — Jerry Vines, pastor, First Church, Jacksonville, Fla.; May 13 — "Buster" Soaries Jr., of First Church, Lincoln Garden, Som-



**MISSION FRIENDS** of First Church, Waverly, pose during 'Cowboy Night' March 27. They learned about Del Bowman, a missionary in Texas. Mission Friends and leaders include, from left, front row, Justin Painter, Jessica Glascock, Cody Saffel; middle row, Linda Poyner, Jessica Painter, Lauren Higgins, Abigail Taylor, Janie Betty; back row, Mitchel Malkowski, Michael Capps, Kathleen Campbell, Sydney Saffel, and Brooklyn Glascock.

erset, N.J.; May 20 — Phil Hoskins, pastor, Higher Ground Church, Kingsport; and May 27 — music by The Supernals and Crimson River.

## ■ the associations

■ **McMinn-Meigs Association** held a World Missions

Conference March 17-20. Forty-five churches participated.

■ The Military Oasis at the naval base in Millington, which is sponsored by **Shelby Association**, will host Captain James A. "Tony" Mallory, first commanding officer of the base, May 17 at 7:30 p.m. The occasion is the eve of Armed Forces Day. It is the first time the oasis has hosted the commanding officers of the base.

## ■ the leaders

■ **Dave Cochran** has been called as interim pastor of Bethel Church, Henderson, effective April 7.

■ **Lamontville Church, Calhoun**, has called **Mike Williams** as pastor.

■ **Sullivan Church, Kingsport**, has called **Jeff Strong**, interim pastor, as pastor, effective March 31. He was an electrical engineer before serving the church.



**THE FAMILY OF RON SORAH** pose during the recognition of his 25th anniversary of service as pastor at First Church, Calhoun, March 3. From left are Jeanne McDowell, Judith Flowers, Margaret and Ron Sorah, Jonathan Sorah, and Joseph Sorah. Recognition activities included a luncheon at the Calhoun Elementary School.



**LEADERS OF MOUNT LEBANON CHURCH, Maryville**, break ground March 17 to expand its education and recreation facilities. Leaders include, from left, Wally Vernell, consultant; John Niethammer; Raymond Burnett, pastor; Jimmy White; Ray Luck, former pastor who is director of missions, Loudon County Association; and Michael Brady, an architect.

# Tennessee Sampler ■ views, insights

## The power of friendship

By Greg Spears, associate pastor  
Speedway Terrace Church, Memphis

"This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" John 15:12-15.

Friendship is a most powerful influence in our lives. Jesus said that if we do what he commands — that we are

his friends — Wow! So what if we fail to do what he commands — what does that make us? If friendship is so powerful what is it like to have no friends — or to have your friends turn away from you? King David in his time of need said, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul" Psalms 142:4.

We are surrounded with tremendous opportunities each day to practice our Christianity — to do what Jesus commanded us to do. We must become more sensitive to the needs of our friends. We must care for and love those God has allowed to be in our little worlds. If we fail in this fundamental task — then we fail to live up to the commands of our Lord and we nullify

our claim to know him.

I exhort and encourage all of you to consider the blessings God has placed in your life — financial, material, your home, your talents, your car, etc. How does Christ fit into the use of these? Are these blessings becoming barriers to others or are they blessings to your friends? Whose soul have you cared for this past week? □

## When right seems wrong

By Allen Raines, pastor  
Everett Hills Church, Maryville

When the crowd is running in the wrong direction, it's hard to be the only one to run the right way. Recently in a NCAA cross country race, most of the

participants took a wrong turn. One runner waded to the other 127 runners to change and follow him, but only four did.

The path that non-Christians choose may seem right to them, however, it leads to eternal loss. Keep on keeping on the right path — no matter how many others are going the other way. □

Articles included in "Tennessee Sampler — views, insights" are written by Tennessee Baptist church and associational leaders. The articles are chosen for publication from newsletters of churches and associations. The *Baptist and Reflector* does not necessarily concur with the views expressed.

# Beware of kids dabbling in occult, Kentucky educator warns

By Joyce Sweeney Martin  
For Baptist Press

STANFORD, Ky. — Interest in the occult is one of the fastest-growing phenomena in the United States, and teenagers especially are vulnerable, according to an academician who has done extensive study of the occult.

But teens don't understand that when they dabble they are "playing with Satan," said Charles Rice, dean at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College.

Rice led a workshop on the occult during Kentucky Baptist Convention-sponsored conferences on cults in early March. Stanford Church and the Clear Creek college hosted the meetings.

The "occult" is an umbrella term which includes divination, astrology, palmistry, crystal gazing, Ouija board and

Tarot cards, magic (not sleight-of-hand tricks), witchcraft, communicating with the dead, and Satanism.

Rice said curiosity and peer pressure may entice youth to be drawn into the "soft stuff," such as books, the Ouija board, Dungeons and Dragons games, and music and videos which promote the occult. But often, youth soon find themselves into "a power which they can't control," he said.

Rice illustrated that power by showing a clip from a Geraldo Rivera television show in which Rivera documented the rise of Satanism among teens. Rivera cited several specific cases to show heavy metal music's connection to Satanism and to show Satanic rituals such as grave robbing.

While Satanism is the darkest side of the occult, it is the hardest to classify, Rice said.

Satanists can be divided into two groups, he explained: (1) those who do not believe in a literal Satan but are opposed to Christianity and see Satan as a symbol of that opposition and (2) those who believe Satan exists and worship him as a powerful god.

"If Satanists could be characterized in one term, it would be 'self-serving,'" Rice said.

"One's own needs, desires, beliefs, and goals are supreme," he observed.

Christian parents should "quit saying their kids aren't at risk," Rice said. "Denial is Satan's greatest tool of deceit."

At a time when teens already are questioning values — including their parents' religious faith — teens are very much at risk, he said.

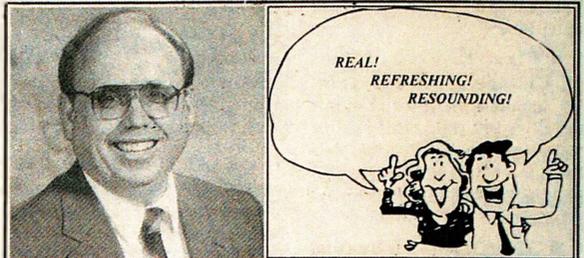
"Teens see things in black

and white with no gray," Rice said.

Thus, when parents tell their children they cannot listen to hard-rock music or watch MTV, teens counter with questions about the un-Christian lyrics of their parents' country music, he said.

"What's so different about Country Music Television than MTV?" he asked.

To counteract, "early help and intervention is essential," Rice said. "Get involved in your teens' lives" by being proactive rather than reactive, he suggested. □



## HAROLD CARMAN, EVANGELIST

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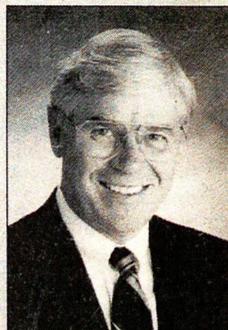
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**Life and Work Series  
for April 21**

**Focal Passage:  
I Thessalonians 2:4-12;  
3:11-13**

**Genuine service**

By L. Joseph Rosas III

We ought to know the difference between genuine love and manipulative sentiment. Jesus said, "A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35). All of us can think of persons in our lives who have genuinely shown the love of God.

**Unselfish action (ch. 2:4-6a).** Paul's character and actions were frequently under attack by those who opposed the Gospel. This may explain the defensive tone in these verses. The Lord had tested Paul's heart and found him trustworthy. He was no slick talker. Nor were his actions governed by greed. He simply wanted to please the Lord.

**Gentle behavior (vv. 6b-9).** In his selfless desire to serve God, Paul had refused to exercise the prerogatives of apostolic authority in demanding financial support from the church. He cared for the Thessalonians. Preaching has been called truth shared through personality. Paul not only shared the truth of the Gospel, he transparently shared himself. Only love can cast out the fear that limits such self-disclosure. Paul was intentionally bivocational in order that nothing would hinder the dissemination of the Gospel.

**Concern for other's best interest (vv. 10-12).** Paul's claim that "you know," "remember," and are "witnesses" indicates that the quality and character of his service was well documented. To be holy means to be set apart for God's purpose, to be righteous is to live right based upon the standard of the righteousness of God credited to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, to be blameless is to live in such a way that others cannot truthfully find fault or blame in what one says or does. Paul was not only gentle like a mother, he displayed the encouraging, comforting and urging of a father. Most of the Thessalonians had come out of a pagan background. Thus they needed pervasive and persuasive discipleship. The goal of this fatherly attention was they might "walk worthy" of their new identity and relationship to God. The journey of faith likened to a walk reminds us that we must make regular daily progress, one step at a time, in living the Christian life.

**Intercessory prayer (ch. 3:11-13).** Few expressions are sweeter than "I am praying for you." Paul interrupts his continuing encouragement of the church by offering up a spontaneous prayer. He prays that God would "clear the way" for his journey to Thessalonica. He also prays that their love would "overflow" crossing all the boundaries that personality, tradition, class, and the like might impose, even including those outside the family of faith. A growing love for others is a positive sign a person is walking with the God who loved us enough to send his Son as our Savior. Love is marked by practical concern for and ministry to others. Paul's desire was that God might "strengthen your heart." Just as an athlete trains certain muscles with specific activities in mind, so the believer is built up in order to reflect God's character and purpose.

Martin Luther said that we should live as if Jesus died yesterday, was risen today, and coming tomorrow. May God help us to live and love in such a way that we appropriate the ministry of true friends in our behalf even as we seek to be a true friend to those around us. We are part of the larger family of faith, all the saints of all the ages. □ — L. Joseph Rosas III is pastor of Union Avenue Church, Memphis.

**The Good Shepherd**

By Kevin Goza

**Convention Uniform Series  
for April 21  
Focal Passage:  
John 10:1-18**

Television channels are full of religious programming, promoting people who want to be our "spiritual leaders." How can you know which ones deserve to

be heard? Christians are to follow those who follow Jesus. While giving a description of Jesus as The Good Shepherd, our passage also gives us a description of those who are worthy to give spiritual leadership.

The sheepfold was a familiar concept to the people of Jesus' day. The containment area would be totally enclosed, with only one opening. There would often be a doorkeeper who was responsible to allow only the shepherd into the fold. Once inside, the shepherd could call out for his sheep. They knew his voice, and would follow.

Sheep-stealing was a popular activity. A thief would enter the fold by sneaking over the fence. He would attempt to call the sheep away. The sheep would not follow him, because his voice was not that of the shepherd.

According to verse 6, the disciples heard the story, but could not make the vital connection between shepherding and following him. In the following verses, Jesus makes his point very clear.

Jesus first described his relationship with his undershepherds using the first of two of the famous "I Am" sayings. Jesus told them he was the door to the sheep. In this first reference, the point is related to spiritual leaders who would attempt to have influence among spiritual people. People called to lead others are first of all to have entered into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

There have always been those who pretend to know God. However, without Christ in their own hearts, they are spiritual charlatans who deprive people of true salvation. They enter into the fold through some

other way, and are nothing more than thieves and robbers.

We see in verses 9-10 Jesus boldly says he alone is the door of entry into God's kingdom. The impostors claim to have some other

way to a spiritual life. However, the outcome of their teaching is destruction. When one gives their life to Jesus, they find total and absolute fulfillment.

Jesus had much to say about the character of the Good Shepherd in the second "I Am" saying in this passage. We discover those who follow the Good Shepherd will never be deserted by him. A hireling will flee when trouble arises. The word translated "see" means to be a spectator, indicating he is not personally involved in the lives of the sheep. Jesus remains steadfast. This is also a description of God's human undershepherds. Knowing that Jesus stands true, they will also remain firm on the foundation of truth and love for the flock.

There is also a mutual knowledge between the Shepherd and the sheep. It is a knowledge based on experience. The sheep know the Good Shepherd will sacrifice his life for their benefit.

The words of verse 16 are encouraging. The call of the Good Shepherd will not be missed by any of his sheep. Through all kinds of people, at all times of history, in all types of circumstances, God's message will be spoken. His sheep will hear his voice, and will respond to his call to salvation.

The Good Shepherd's ministry is rooted in the love of God, which makes it possible for Jesus to lay down his life, and take it up again. While Jesus portrayed his sacrifice as voluntary, it is also true that Jesus' sacrifice was specified as a command from God.

Jesus, The Good Shepherd, is one who can be followed to the ends of the earth. □ — Kevin Goza is pastor of First Church, Lebanon.

**God who punishes and protects**

By Tom Moncrief

**Bible Book Series for April 21  
Focal Passage:  
Nahum 1:1-3a, 7-9, 12-15; 3:5-7**

God, sometimes expresses his love through chastisement for sin and wrong-doing. Even this punitive action is motivated by love.

**Avenging judge — 1:1-3a**

God had been very patient with Ninevah (Assyria). The brutal war-faring people had over-run everyone around them. The Israelites had become a part of their holdings and were treated brutally. Nahum received a message from God that he was going to deal with his adversaries. Although he is slow to anger, he cannot ignore wickedness. In delaying punishment it appears that God gives every opportunity for evil people to respond to him and his love. Failure to do so inevitably brings destruction.

Nahum is an outstanding literary work and is "one of the world's classic rebukes of militarism." For God to have ignored the harshness of Ninevah would have denied his very character. We see it is impossible to withstand God who maintains justice.

**Refuge and relentless pursuer — vv. 7-9**

God's goodness is revealed through the protective care of those who take refuge in him. It is also shown by his actions in regard to those who would plot against him. His wrath is at work when he permits sinful deeds to run their course

to destruction. Assyria's wickedness results in nations ultimately rising up against her and bringing her downfall. God uses them to bring Ninevah to an end. They released the waters from the rivers which broke the wall for about two miles. This enabled the hostile armies to gain access to the city. Ninevah, who had plotted against the Lord (v. 9) could plot no longer.

**Protector of his people — vv. 12-15**

Ninevah was feared by everybody around. Judah had experienced the weight of her yoke (affliction). Now, God promises to break that yoke. Though the enemy was powerful and numerous, God would set free his people. God admitted that he had chastised Judah but promised to respond to their faith (though Nahum does not mention this) by ending the chastisement through Assyria.

He promised the name of Assyria will not be perpetuated, the idols of the royal temples would be cut off, and Assyria's doom is at hand because of their vileness. So, God who is slow to anger now ends the ruthlessness of a nation whose peo-

ple refused to acknowledge God.

**Dread of his enemies — ch. 3:5-7**

Listing many of Assyria's sinful actions (vv. 1-4) the prophet delivers God's sentence for her harlotries. There would be exposure (v. 5), contemptuous rejection (v. 6), and desertion (v. 7). Throwing filth upon harlots doesn't seem to appear elsewhere in the Old Testament. This action along with exposure would bring degradation which would be a gazestock for all to look upon.

Ninevah is wasted but there would be none to bemoan her end. Instead, the messenger would announce the end of her oppression (v. 15). This declaration of peace would delight those who heard it.

The downfall of Ninevah came at some of her proudest moments when they were prestigious, wealthy, and powerful. Any nation of any age must be strong to remain free but must also be concerned about justice and human rights. She must also remember that the true power and security come from God to whom she must remain true. □

— Tom Moncrief is a member of First Church, Cleveland.

## Annuity Board denies breaking Florida law

Baptist Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention has denied a charge published in a Jacksonville newspaper that it illegally sold insurance in Florida.

A news story in the March 29 edition of the *Florida Times Union* indicates the state of Florida launched an investigation after a maintenance worker at First Church, Plant City, was rejected for health insurance coverage by the Annuity Board.

During a probe, investigators discovered the Annuity Board was not authorized to sell insurance in Florida, but the investigation was later halted by Florida insurance commissioner Bill Nelson who decided to support legislation that would "exempt church groups from state insurance regulations."

Annuity Board spokesman Tom Miller said the agency cooperated fully with Nelson "to assure his office that our coverage is an appropriate, financially stable program that offers excellent protection to pastors and other church employees. ...

"We believe this record of service, along with proof of the stability of our program, was sufficient to satisfy the commissioner that further pursuit of the investigation was not needed," Miller said. □

## Love in action boosts Croatia church growth

Baptist Press

ZABREB, Croatia — During four years of bloody war in the former Yugoslavia, Southern Baptists have quietly sent almost \$3 million worth of food, cooking supplies, and other help to victims on all sides.

Those four years of love in action are now boosting church planting across Croatia.

People throughout the region have come to see Baptists as a people who care, people with a message that just might be worth hearing.

Soon after the war broke out, Croatian Baptists set up aid organizations to channel food and aid from Southern Baptists and other Christian and humanitarian organizations. As they handed out food parcels, they also distributed thousands of Bibles, tracts, and other Christian literature. And they have preached on television and radio.

This past winter, Baptists

helped keep hundreds of thousands of refugees alive with ongoing food distribution.

Croatian Baptists are excited. "We are quite enthusiastic. Our churches are growing and we have some great new projects on the way," says Branko Lovrec, president of the Croatian Baptist Union, which now claims 33 churches and about 2,800 members. □

## Former BWA leader Robert Denny dies

Baptist Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Robert S. Denny, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance from 1968-80, who played a significant role in defending religious freedom during the communist totalitarianism of Eastern Europe, died April 5.

Denny, 81, had suffered for the past two years from Alzheimer's disease.

He is survived by his wife, Jane, and two children. □

## Kentucky associate choice for editorship

Baptist Press

LOUISVILLE — Mark Wingfield has been nominated to become editor of the *Western Recorder*, the weekly newspaper affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Wingfield, 34, was unanimously approved for the post by the paper's board of directors April 2. The nomination

## Retirees receive Southern Baptist aid

Baptist Press

DALLAS — More than 9,000 retired Southern Baptist ministers or their widows receive \$200 or less a month in pension benefits from their denominational retirement plan.

"It is the old story of too little, too late," said Paul W. Powell, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Annuity Board. "Thousands of our churches and pastors did not make the Church Annuity Plan a priority in their salary and benefits planning. By the time the reality of the need soaked in, it was too late to catch up.

"Now, we look to the Cooperative Program to provide relief funds for the most desperate cases," Powell said, "and to the Annuity Board's Adopt An Annuitant Program as an added blessing."

Powell tells of stacks of letters he receives that recall pastoral ministries reaching 30 or 40 years, always in small churches, and al-

ways depending on God and his people to meet modest human needs. "These old soldiers of the cross assumed nothing except a simple faith that God would provide," Powell said. "There is almost never a complaint, but always a humble, gracious 'Thank You' for every evidence of love and care by Southern Baptists."

Powell noted, "Every penny of Cooperative Program money we receive goes to some needy church or missions worker or his widow. That means about \$1.2 million this year will be divided among some 540 individuals or couples as monthly or expense grants. The operating expense of the board is paid from earnings on assets without any subsidy from the Cooperative Program," he said.

Last year an average relief recipient was 78 years old with total monthly income from all sources of \$680 and total expenses of \$861.

The maximum regular monthly grant from the Annuity Board is \$180 for an individual and \$240 for a couple, Powell said. □

must be confirmed by the KBC executive Board May 6.

The *Western Recorder* is an agency of the KBC with its own board of directors. However, a covenant agreement between the paper and the KBC stipulates that the KBC executive board must confirm by simple majority vote the person selected as editor.

Wingfield has been interim editor since last December when former editor Marv Knox resigned to become associate editor of the *Baptist Standard* in Texas.

Wingfield has been news director of the Kentucky paper since 1991. □

## Baptists help resettle 797 refugees in 1995

Baptist Press

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Southern Baptists helped resettle 797 refugees in 1995, a 30 percent increase from the previous year, according to the Home Mission Board's office of immigration and refugee ministries.

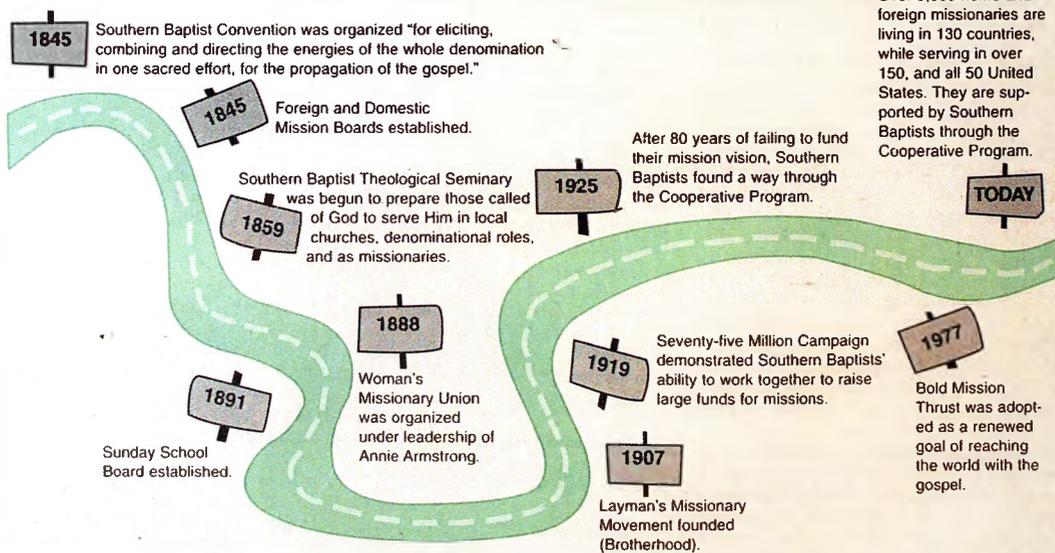
Office director Bill Fulkerson said an increase in the number of refugees worldwide influenced the jump in the number who were assigned to Southern Baptists by a national resettlement agency.

Fulkerson predicted, however, the number will shrink in 1996 because of a reduction in refugees allowed into America.

Southern Baptists have been promoting and coordinating the sponsorship of refugees since 1962, according to Fulkerson. "One of the misconceptions people have is that just anyone can come into the United States and settle down, but refugees must have a sponsor.

More information about refugee resettlement is available from Baptist associations, state Baptist conventions, or from the HMB office of immigration and refugee ministries at (770) 410-6012. □

## THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION HAS BUILT A HIGHWAY OF COMMUNICATION ON WHICH THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST TRAVELS



Sunday, April 21, is Cooperative Program Day